

I do not want Medicare to die on the vine. I want it to live and to continue to provide health care and security to our older Americans.

The Speaker and the Republicans have been saying for weeks now that what they were trying to do was to save Medicare. We told you that was not their purpose. Now the truth is out. They never wanted Medicare. They never wanted Medicare in 1965. And now they want it to die on the vine.

We have got to fight to keep it living and serving our senior citizens. We cannot let Medicare die on the vine.

MORE ON THE MEDICARE DEBATE

(Mr. PASTOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, again, we say the Speaker made a mistake. Last weekend I happened to be in Phoenix with a number of senior citizens at a senior housing project, El Prima Vera, and they were concerned that we were taking away Medicare. I said, what is it, the Democrats in the debate scaring you?

They said, no, our fear has been reassured, reconfirmed, because we have heard the Republican leadership plan and clear, plain English, with the Senate President telling us that he did not support Medicare because he thought it would fail, which is false because that is a safety net that many seniors today rely on to get their medical health care.

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And then to top it off, it was the Speaker who was not concerned about the administration but who wanted to abolish Medicare, and that is the plain English truth.

REPUBLICANS HAVE THE ONLY PLAN

(Mr. ALLARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton says he thinks we can balance the budget in 7 years. Republicans have passed a bill that balances the budget in 7 years.

President Clinton says he wants to cut taxes. Republicans have passed a bill that cuts taxes for families and promotes economic growth.

President Clinton says he wants to save Medicare from bankruptcy. Republicans have passed a bill that saves Medicare for this generation and sets the stage for the baby boomers.

President Clinton says he wants to end welfare as we know it. Republicans have passed a plan to revolutionize the failed welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. If the President is going to veto our balanced budget bill, then he is obligated to show us specifically what he would do differently. Balancing the budget is

about more than just press conferences and talking points, it is about specific plans. And right now Republicans are the only ones with a legitimate plan.

THE DEFICIT HAS ALREADY BEEN CUT

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Members, we hear talk about the 7-year balanced budget and the 10-year balanced budget.

We did not develop the debt that we have or the deficit in 7 years or even 10 years. In fact, in the 1980's, the deficit exploded, but it took us decades to get the financial house in the shape that we have it now. In fact, in 1992, the last year of a Republican administration in the White House, we had a \$290 billion deficit. This year, that deficit is down to \$163 billion.

Now, whether we talk about 7 years or 10 years, that is all a political game. What we are talking about is that we reduced the deficit under a Democratic President, without cutting Medicare, without cutting education, and without raiding the pension plans.

We do not need to let Medicare wither on the vine, Mr. Speaker.

KEEPING OUR PROMISES

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, apparently the previous speaker does not understand the difference between the debt and the deficit. We are not talking about paying off a debt that it has taken some 40 years to run up. We are talking about balancing the budget and bringing the deficit from \$200 billion down to zero.

No question about it, when you have a \$5 trillion debt, it would be very difficult to pay that off in a 7-year period. Unfortunately, this budget does not do that. It does not, in fact, pay off any of it, but what it does do is it gets us down to zero in terms of deficit.

Last week we did pass a balanced budget bill for the first time in 25 years. In doing that, we kept our promise. We kept our promise.

The President made a promise 3 years ago he was going to balance the budget in a 5-year period. He did not keep that promise.

In fact, he gave us a bad budget agreement in 1993 that showed \$250 billion deficits as far as the eye can see.

We made the promise to balance the budget. We kept that promise, and that is probably the most important promise that we could have kept.

Because what does it mean? It means lower interest rates. It means more prosperity. It means more jobs. It means we are not going to be taxing our children for our own profligacy.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON VA-HUD BILL TO ELIMINATE ENVIRONMENTAL RIDERS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, there is going to be an effort this afternoon which I support to try to eliminate environmental riders that were put into the EPA appropriations bill by the Republican leadership. These Republican riders would severely hamper the EPA's ability to enforce regulations that are the veritable backbone of environmental protection in this country, leaving the EPA severely crippled and the environment utterly defenseless.

These provisos, supported by the Republican leadership, would limit EPA's ability to spend funds on activities related to the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, RCRA, and Superfund. They even prevent the EPA from establishing drinking water standards for radon and arsenic, both known carcinogens.

These provisions are criminal in terms of the effects they will have on the environment. Then again, letting the environmental criminals off the hook is exactly what these provisions are all about.

I hope we are successful on a bipartisan basis this afternoon in eliminating these riders that severely hamper our ability to prevent the degradation of the Nation's environment.

IT IS TIME TO SET OUR COUNTRY ON THE RIGHT COURSE

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, what do the American people want? They want a Federal Government that is smaller, less costly, and less intrusive. They want us to cut spending and balance the budget. They want relief from taxes. They want us to reform the broken welfare system. And they want us to save Medicare from going bankrupt.

This is exactly why the people elected a Republican majority for the first time in 40 years. They wanted change from the status quo, and we have delivered that change. They wanted Republicans to keep our promises to balance the budget, cut taxes, reform welfare, and save Medicare. We have kept our promises.

Now it is our President's turn. Will President Clinton keep the promises he made? It is time to set our country on the right course. It is what the people want.

DO NOT SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1